

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00951 141838Z

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ACTION A-01

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R 141200Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6456

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0951

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, OREP, IC

SUBJECT: VISIT OF STAFF MEMBER, HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

REF: COMICEDEFOR 131701Z JUL 76

1. IN COURSE OF JULY 8-11 VISIT TO NAVAL STATION, KEFLAVIK, DEREK VANDER SCHAFF, CONGRESSIONAL ASSISTANT ON HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, ASKED FOR PRIVATE MEETING WITH CHARGE APPARENTLY TO SEEK CONFIRMATION OF FACTS AND OPINIONS PRESENTED TO HIM BY COMICEDEFOR. SAID HE HAD COME WITH CERTAIN IDEAS IN MIND BUT HAD MODIFIED THEM ON BASIS OF VISIT. HOWEVER, HE SAID, "FACT HAS TO BE FACED THAT EC-121 SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT WILL BE PHASED OUT" WITHIN NEXT TWO YEARS. HE ASKED CHARGE HOW EMBASSY WOULD APPROACH PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH GOI IN SUCH CASE. CHARGE REPLIED, AS HAD COMICEDEFOR, THAT WE COULD RATIONALIZE ANYTHING WE HAVE TO BUT ISSUE IS THAT OF CREDIBILITY OF DEFENSE OF ICELAND. WE ARE NOW IN SITUATION (FOLLOWING LAST COD WAR) WHERE IT IS BEING CHARGED THAT USG HAS NO INTEREST IN DEFENSE OF ICELAND BUT SEES IT ONLY AS EARLY WARNING BASE FOR US. IF SOME STEP IS TO BE TAKEN TO CHANGE US MILITARY CAPABILITIES IN ICELAND, WE WILL BE OBLIGATED TO GIVE GOI AS MUCH WARNING AS POSSIBLE AND TO EXPLAIN HOW STEP CAN BE TAKEN WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING DEFENSE.

2. VANDER SCHAFF WAS AWARE OF ARTICLE IN COMMUNIST-LINING DAILY THJODVILJINN ABOUT REPAIRS TO OFF-SHORE CABLES AND HE ASKED IF CABLES WERE OFTEN DISCUSSED IN ICELAND AND
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WHETHER ENOUGH WAS KNOWN ABOUT THEM TO JEOPARDIZE WARTIME

SECURITY. CHARGE REPLIED THAT BECAUSE FISHING TRAWLERS HAD COUGHT THEIR NETS IN CABLES, LOCATIONS AT SEA WHERE INCIDENTS HAD HAPPENED HAD BEEN PUBLISHED IN PRESS AND IT WAS ALSO GENERALLY KNOWN WHERE CABLES CAME ASHORE.

3. IN DISCUSSING ROLE OF F-4 INTERCEPTORL AIIRCRAFT, VANDER-SCHAFF SEEMED SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL OF THEIR UTILITY AND SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WAS AN ELEMENT OF "PLAYING WAR GAMES" INVOLVED IN BASE ACTIVITIES. SAID, HOWEVER, HE HAD NOT COME TO ICELAND "TO TEAR THINGS APART" AND DID NOT FORE-SEE ANY DRASTIC CHANGES EXCEPT FOR PHASING OUT OF EC-121'S.

4. IT WAS EMBASSY'S IMPRESSION THAT VANDER SCHAFF WAS A BRIGHT YOUNG MAN WHO HAD DONE HIS HOMEWORK AND KNOW THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK. HE WAS OPEN-MINDED AND HIS VISIT HERE CHANGED SOME PRE-CONCEPTIONS. ON WHOLE, WE BELIEVE IT WAS MOST USEFUL.
MARTIN

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